ANNUAL REPORT 1987-88

Alberta
SOCIAL SERVICES

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Alberta

FAMILY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Office of the Minister

104 Legislature Building, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5K 2B6 403/427-2606 Fax 403/427-0954

To the Honourable David J. Carter
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Sir:

We are pleased to present the annual report of Alberta Social Services*, which covers the fiscal year ending March 31, 1988.

Respectfully submitted,

John A. Oldring
Minister

Norm A. Weiss
Associate Minister

*Department name changed following end of reporting year.

Alberta
SOCIAL SERVICES

Office of the Deputy Minister

Seventh Street Plaza, 10030 - 107 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5J 3E4 403/427-6448

Honourable John A. Oldring
Minister of Family and Social Services

Honourable Norm A. Weiss
Associate Minister of Family and Social Services

Sirs:

I have the honour to present the annual report of Alberta Social Services*, which covers the fiscal year ending March 31, 1988.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Stan Remple
Deputy Minister
Social Services

*Department name changed to Family and Social Services following end of reporting year.

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Alberta Social Services exists to protect and promote the social well-being of Albertans. It does this by developing and administering statutory and mandated social service programs which encourage and support individual and family independence and self-reliance. Some of the Department's functions include:

- protecting the safety and legal rights of children and dependent adults, if these rights are threatened;
- covering the basic costs of food, clothing, shelter and care for people unable to meet these needs for themselves or for their families;
- helping people who are dependent on public support or protection to become independent or more self-reliant;
- assisting people who are close to becoming dependent on public support to remain fully independent, or to reduce the degree of support they may require in the future.

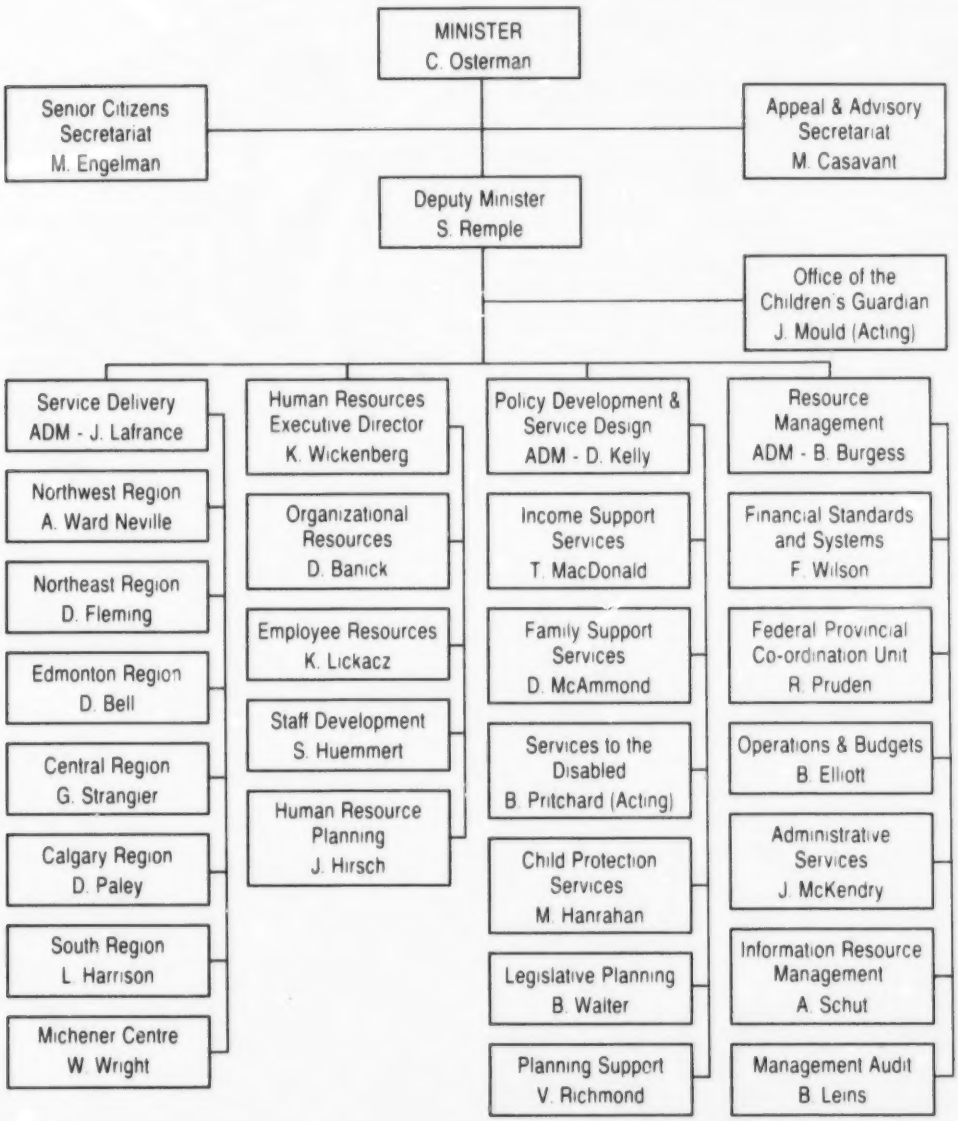
The Department is guided by a set of basic principles:

- respect for human rights;
- support of personal responsibility and independence;
- belief in the family as the best place to resolve problems;
- belief in the importance of prevention and early intervention;
- commitment to quality services; and
- accountability to the public for services provided.

In 1987-88, the Department continued to operate in an environment of fiscal restraint. The slowed economy gradually began to recover from an economic downturn. There was a need to balance fiscal responsibility while continuing to provide quality services to meet client needs.

There has been a continuing increase in the use of computer technology to streamline benefits administration in order to allow staff more time with clients. In order to give clients better services while making the best use of staff resources, a great emphasis was placed on individual case planning. Social Services has become more involved with community groups and agencies and with other departments to plan and deliver the best possible services to clients.

Social Services is organized to provide services to Albertans through, 1) a Regional Service Delivery structure and, 2) an Administrative Support function.



Social Allowance, Alberta Assured Income Plan, Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped, Child (Day) Care and Widows' Pension are all financial support programs operated by Alberta Social Services.

The Department also provides social support services for children and adults. For children, the services include Child Protection, Handicapped Children's Services, and the Office of the Children's Guardian.

For adults and families, the Department provides the following social support services: Family Relations, the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence, Women's Emergency Shelters, Residential Services to the Handicapped, Employment Support Services to the Handicapped, Employment Support to Social Allowance Recipients, the Office of the Public Guardian, the Senior Citizens Secretariat, and the Appeal and Advisory Secretariat.

INCOME SUPPORT TO ALBERTANS

Social Allowance

The purpose of the Social Allowance program is to ensure that every Albertan who is in financial need receives the basic necessities of life, as defined in legislation. Meeting these basic needs through goods and services allows each person to maintain essential health and well-being. The program encourages Albertans to reach the highest level of financial self-sufficiency they can.

Social Allowance is the largest single program in Social Services, amounting to slightly more than half the Department's total budget. Social Allowance benefits include payments to clients to buy food, clothing, household goods and shelter, as well as other approved needs such as dental, medical and optical services, transportation, laundry, telephone, special diets, funerals and other needs. Where appropriate, clients are also referred to employment and client support services that may be able to help them find work and become financially self-sufficient.

The amount of financial assistance granted will depend on:

- family size
- the age of family members
- income
- special needs, such as those related to illness
- whether the applicant is employable
- duration on assistance.

The basic allowance (food, clothing, household and personal allowance) and shelter allowance account for more than 80% of the Department's income security budget.

Normally, clients are screened when they first apply. After this, they have an application interview with a caseworker at which they are advised on the kind of documentation they must provide. If necessary, a district office cheque or voucher is issued right away, to meet emergency needs. The regular monthly cheque arrives by mail shortly before the end of each month to allow payment of the next month's rent. About 60% of clients receive their cheques through automatic payroll.

Clients have the right to appeal Department decisions about their benefits to citizens' appeal panels. In 1987-88, more than 5,500 appeals were heard, of which 65% resulted in changes to the original decision of the Department.

Fifty percent of the provincial Social Allowance budget comes from the federal government, under the terms of the Canada Assistance Plan.

One-third of the Social Allowance caseload is made up of single parent families, of which 95% are headed by women. About one-quarter of the single parents are working part-time or full-time and need to have their employment income subsidized. Another 25% are seeking employment.

About 15% of Social Allowance clients are not required to seek employment, due to physical or mental handicaps. Most of the people in this group are single. About 1,300 of these people qualify for Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped, but need Social Allowance money because of exceptionally high medical expenses or because they support families.

More than 40% of all cases are termed employable. About 13% of these are already employed part-time or full-time and need to have their earnings subsidized to meet the basic needs of their families. About two-thirds of the employable clients are single, and of these, three-quarters are men.

Highlights

- The Social Allowance caseload rose to 68,014 (up approximately 8% from 1986/87) in 1987-88. As a result, an additional $85 million was spent to cover the costs of the extra cases.
- Organizational changes were made to streamline services. Some of the province's district offices piloted computer systems to automate various aspects of the income security process.
- A new income security program manual was introduced in December, 1987, which provided income security staff with current, standard working procedures.
- In-depth training was provided to income security staff to help them use the new manual more effectively.
- Two pilot projects were started in late summer, 1987, to counter income security fraud and error. The first of these was the Eligibility Verification project, which confirms the eligibility and benefits of a random sample of income security applicants. The second was the Client Reporting Card, which keeps track of any changes to the personal or financial situation of income security clients which might cause a change in their benefits.
- Budget constraints resulted in a reduction in shelter and food rates for single employable clients, effective April 1, 1987. At the same time, an allowance was created for the eldest child in single parent families. These two changes were based on the view that of all income security clients, singles could best make the lifestyle changes necessary to adapt to the budget restrictions, and that single parent families would be least able to adapt to such changes.

Table 1: **Average Monthly Social Allowance Caseload By Category - 1987-88**

	NW	NE	EDM	CEN	CAL	SOU	TOTAL
Age (over 60)	266	175	1,458	278	1,144	204	3,525
Single Parent	1,696	1,334	9,535	2,697	6,368	1,660	23,290
Phys. Ill Health	645	468	3,410	1,039	2,333	525	8,420
Mental Ill Health	123	62	825	209	639	111	1,969
Employable	2,348	1,669	12,044	3,130	9,832	1,790	30,813
TOTAL	5,079	3,708	27,271	7,352	20,316	4,290	68,014
Guardian Social Allowance	382	311	647	239	304	116	1,999
Transients							500*

Note: Numbers may not add up to total, due to rounding.

*Regional breakdown not available.

Table 2: **Average Monthly AISH Caseload - 1987-88**

REGION	AISH	S'ALL WITH HANDICAP BENEFIT	MODIFIED AISH	TOTAL
Northwest	873	95	33	1,001
Northeast	1,077	80	47	1,204
Edmonton	4,928	565	328	5,821
Central	1,489	112	44	1,645
Calgary	3,415	401	208	4,024
South	1,350	90	100	1,540
TOTAL	13,131	1,343	761	15,235

Alberta Assured Income Plan (AAIP)

AAIP provides an income supplement to seniors in Alberta who also receive federal money from the Guaranteed Income Supplement. The program provides benefits of between $10 and $95 per month, plus health, dental and medical benefits. The size of the benefits depends on the amount received from the federal program.

Forty-eight percent of Alberta's senior citizens receive AAIP. Over 30% of single recipients receive maximum benefits, while more than 90% of couples receive less than the maximum. Approximately 55% of AAIP clients are single.

The average monthly caseload in 1987-88 was 90,468 (up about 3% from 1986/87).

Assured Income For The Severely Handicapped (AISH)

The purpose of AISH is to provide an assured level of income, as well as drug, ambulance, optical and dental care coverage to severely and permanently disabled people, aged 18 to 64, who have little or no income. The maximum benefit in 1987-88 was $720 per month. If people are unable to meet their basic needs from the regular AISH benefits, they can apply to the Social Allowance program for handicap benefits.

Recipients living in nursing homes, auxiliary hospitals and other facilities receive a personal allowance, while the institution provides for their basic needs. This is known as modified AISH.

A total of 15,235 Albertans received some form of AISH benefits in 1988, up approximately 11% from 1986/87. Most (82%) recipients are single and without dependents, and half have received AISH benefits for more than four years.

Department decisions about AISH can be appealed to a citizens' review committee. More than 1150 appeals were heard in 1987-88.

Child Care

The purpose of the Child Care program is to set and enforce minimum standards in licensed day care facilities, and to provide funds to day care centres and family day homes on behalf of the families who use them.

Funding is provided to day care facilities through the payment of operating allowances, low income family subsidies, administrative fees, and through funding to help integrate handicapped children into regular day care.

Day care centres and family day home services are operated on a private sector or community agency basis, by organizations or individuals.

Financial support is provided in the following ways:

- The day care subsidy program provides financial assistance to low income families, whose pre-school children are attending licensed day care centres or approved family day homes. The subsidy helps to pay for child care while parents are working or getting an education, or when a child has special needs. The subsidy is paid to the day care centre or family day home agency. Based on their ability to pay, parents contribute a minimum of $45.00/month to the cost of day care. The maximum subsidy is $240.00/month.

- The operating allowance paid to day care centres exists to fund enrolled spaces, regardless of parents' income.

- The integrated day care program provides additional funds and advisory services to facilities which care for children with special needs.

- An administrative fee is provided to family day home agencies who contract with Alberta Social Services. The agencies supervise family day homes, which can care for a maximum of three children per home.

Day care facilities are licensed and monitored by regional licensing staff, who also license all other social care facilities in the province (e.g. residences for children and persons with disabilities and women's emergency shelters).

In 1987-88, the estimated number of birth to five-year-old children in Alberta was 247,950. Of these, about 28,675 (12%) were in Department-funded child care. Approximately 400 children were served in integrated day care.

In 1987-88, administrative fees were paid to family day home agencies for a monthly average of 4,936 children cared for in day homes. Operating allowances were paid for an average of 24,062 children in day care centres.

Highlights

- A new day care licensing policy manual was completed and introduced across the province in the fall of 1987. The manual should give day care operators, staff and parents a clearer idea of what the Department expects of day care services. It should also make clear what the day care legislation is and allow it to be interpreted consistently by everyone involved.

Table 3: **Facilities (Other than Day Care Centres) Licensed Under the Social Care Facilities Act as of March 31, 1988**

TYPE OF FACILITY	NUMBER LICENSED	CAPACITY
Nursery Schools	450	0610,404
Programs for School-Age Children	322	7,510
Adult Homes for Special Care	245	5,415
Children's Institutions	159	1,768
Licensed Foster Homes	114	589
Social Care Facilities	35	197
TOTAL	1,325	25,883

Table 4: **Licensed Child Care Facilities as of March 31, 1988**

REGION	DAY CARE CENTRES		LICENSED FAMILY DAY HOMES	
	# OF FACILITIES	# OF SPACES	# OF FACILITIES	# OF SPACES
Northwest	23	980	19	103
Northeast	20	813	2	12
Edmonton	315	13,819	15	85
Central	46	2,097	6	34
Calgary	212	11,999	19	108
South	45	1,948	1	6
TOTAL	661	31,656	62	348

Table 5: **Number of Children (Monthly Average) on Whose Behalf Operating Allowances Were Paid to Day Care Centres - 1987-88**

NORTHWEST	NORTHEAST	EDMONTON	CENTRAL	CALGARY	SOUTH	TOTAL
762	555	10,591	1,686	8,956	1,512	24,062

Table 6: **Average Number of Family Day Home Agencies Receiving Administrative Fees - 1987-88**

NORTHWEST	NORTHEAST	EDMONTON	CENTRAL	CALGARY	SOUTH	TOTAL
11	13	16	14	13	21	88

Table 7: **Monthly Average Number of Children on Whose Behalf Administrative Fees Were Paid to Family Day Home Agencies - 1987-88**

NORTHWEST	NORTHEAST	EDMONTON	CENTRAL	CALGARY	SOUTH	TOTAL
269	446	1,894	539	1,175	613	4,936

Table 8: **Average Monthly Number of Families Receiving Low Income Subsidy - 1987-88**

NORTHWEST	NORTHEAST	EDMONTON	CENTRAL	CALGARY	SOUTH	TOTAL
312	311	4,495	768	3,340	782	10,008*

* Of these, 8,283 were one-parent families and 1,725 were two-parent families.

Table 9: **Average Monthly Number of Subsidized Children - 1987-88**

NORTHWEST	NORTHEAST	EDMONTON	CENTRAL	CALGARY	SOUTH	TOTAL
402	391	5,640	982	4,078	998	12,491

Widows' Pension

The purpose of the Widows' Pension program is to provide financial benefits and coverage for medical, optical and dental services to widows or widowers, aged 55 to 64, who have limited or no income. In 1987-88, the maximum monthly benefit was $720.

Some 300 Widows' Pension clients receive medical benefits and provincial housing subsidies only. Two hundred clients are also eligible for the federal Widowed Spouses' Allowance.

Approximately 36% of the clients are aged 55-59; 64% are between the ages of 60 and 64. The average monthly caseload in 1987-88 was 3,445.

SOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

Child Protection

The purpose of Child Protection Services is to ensure that the survival, security and development of children are protected. Services are provided, wherever possible, within the natural family, with the objective of providing permanent, nurturing relationships for children.

Child Protection Services provides many programs and services to protect, enhance and support the development and functioning of children and their families, in the least intrusive way possible. Emphasis is placed on reducing the number of children coming into the care of Social Services, and on reducing their length of stay in care. Wherever possible, the Department makes use of community-based resources that promote family support and protection.

Investigation/Apprehension/Supervision services may be required in cases of child abuse or neglect. Reports of abuse or neglect, and requests for assistance by parents or children, are investigated by district offices. If the situation can be resolved without removing the child from the home, the child welfare worker may refer the family to an appropriate community resource.

If a child's survival, security or development seems to be endangered, child welfare workers may remove the child from the home to a safe, temporary location, such as a receiving or foster home. (This process, called "apprehension," is governed by procedures under the Child Welfare Act.)

Support Agreements and Supervision Orders are two other areas of Child Protection Services. Contractual agreements may be signed by a guardian and the Department (family support agreements), or court orders may allow the Department to supervise the child and guardian in their own home (supervision order). The purpose of a support agreement is to provide support services to a family whose child has been found to be in need of protective services, while allowing the child to remain at home. An example of a support agreement might involve the provision of a homemaker service to a family, where a single parent is found to be neglecting the children.

Support agreements may also be made with a child 16 years of age or over, where the child is living independently of his or her guardian, and the survival, security and development of the child will be protected if the child continues to live independently of the guardian.

Children who are in need of protective services and who cannot be protected in their own home (even through support or supervision) are placed in care. This is the result of an agreement or court order which places the child under the temporary or permanent custody and guardianship of Social Services. Forty percent of the children in the care of the Department are Native.

The Foster Care program is another program providing support and protection to children. If children need protective services, as determined under the Child Welfare Act, the foster care program provides them with a substitute home for the length of time necessary. Since the family is recognized as a basic unit of society, the role of foster parents as a substitute family is emphasized. Ongoing contact with the natural parents is strongly promoted while children are in foster care.

A monthly average of 2,299 children resided in foster homes across Alberta in 1987-88.

The Residential Services Program provides services to children who, because of emotional or behavioural problems, cannot remain in their own home or in substitute family care. Resources range from residential treatment centres to small community group homes. Some residential resources are operated by the Department, while others are contracted to private operators.

Placements require the approval of local child welfare regional placement committees.

There are approximately 81 contracted group homes and 23 institutions in Alberta. As of March 31, 1988, there were 378 children in group homes and 437 children in institutions, including residential resources, compulsory care and detention.

Table 10 **Legal Status of Children Receiving Child Protection Services as of March 31, 1988**

Custody Agreement	933
Family Support Agreement	2,799
Apprehension	67
Permanent Guardianship	2,184
Temporary Guardianship	590
Supervision	302
Other	231
Not Coded	606
TOTAL	7,712

The Adoption program includes both private and ward adoptions. In both cases, the legal effect of an adoption is that the adopted child becomes the child of the adopting parents, who assume the permanent responsibilities of guardianship, as if the child had been born to the family.

The Special Advisor on Native Issues is the Department's main liaison with Native organizations, agencies and communities. Through this Office, the Department seeks to strengthen awareness of Native concerns in social service issues and to cooperate with Native groups in developing social service programs and policies.

Highlights

- A number of amendments to the Child Welfare Act of 1985 were drafted. These reflect needed changes as identified by front line child welfare staff and the courts. The amendments include recognition of the rights of unmarried fathers, provision for a private adoption system, and a re-definition of the role of the Public Guardian.

- Social Services continued to work with Indian and Metis communities toward increasing the authority of Native communities to administer child welfare services, in the spirit of Alberta's child welfare legislation. The Working Committee on Native Child Welfare presented recommendations for long range strategies to the Minister.

- In 1987, 281 children with special needs were placed for adoption. This was achieved through the allocation of additional resources to Adoption Services, use of the Wednesday's Child program, computerized matching and a photo listing album. As well, positive media exposure and special efforts by service delivery staff were invaluable in helping to place the children.

- A private adoption system was proposed, after a review of existing adoption systems by the Provincial Advisory Committee on the Family. The system proposes that Social Services no longer be involved in step-parent adoptions, but will set and monitor standards and licensing criteria, and will license community agencies and coordinate waiting lists. Community agencies will be licensed to provide private adoption services and charge parents for services. This new system will give unmarried mothers and adoptive parents an alternative to current government services.

Table 11: **Placement of Children Legally in the Care of Social Services as of March 31, 1988**

Parents' Home	1,150
Relatives' Home	147
Foster Home	2,225
Group Home	378
Adoption Home	202
Residence Institution	424
Compulsory Care	6
Detention	7
Other	328
Not Available	2,845
TOTAL	7,712

* Note: Does not include children with Handicapped Children's Services (HCS) status.

Table 12: **Child Protection and Community-Operated Contracted Group Homes as of September 30, 1987**

	NW	NE	EDM	CEN	CAL	SOU	TOTAL
Contracted Agencies	4	4	11	6	28	4	57
Group Homes	5	4	31	6	30	5	81

Table 13: **Number of Children in Institutions (Residential Resources, Compulsory Care, Detention) as of September 30, 1987**

	NW	NE	EDM	CEN	CAL	SOU	TOTAL
No. of Children	28	26	96	40	133	22	345

Handicapped Children's Services (H.C.S.)

The Handicapped Children's Services program assists families of handicapped children with the extraordinary demands and costs which result from the handicap, so that their children can remain at home.

HCS provides funds for a variety of services that are delivered by community-based groups, including professional practitioners. Funds are paid to the family of the handicapped child, or directly to the service provider, under an agreement negotiated by an HCS worker with the parents.

Over 90% of the children served by the program live in their family homes.

Highlights

- Resources for the Dependent Handicapped supports three parents in Edmonton who have incorporated as a society. The parents successfully developed a proposal to provide an alternate community living program for their four handicapped children.

Table 14: **Handicapped Children's Services Cases as of March 31, 1988**

NORTHWEST	NORTHEAST	EDMONTON	CENTRAL	CALGARY*	SOUTH	TOTAL
398	245	1,280	496	1,429	406	4,254

* The Region with the largest increase in caseload between 1985-86 and 1987-88 was Calgary, which increased by 493 cases to 1,429 (about 52%). The overall increase in caseloads in 1987-88 was 13%.

Children's Guardian

Under the provisions of the Child Welfare Act, the Children's Guardian is the sole legal guardian of children who are subjects of permanent guardianship orders or agreements and the joint guardian of children who are the subjects of temporary guardianship orders.

The Children's Guardian monitors the services provided to children under guardianship, advocates for change when problems are identified, and makes the major decisions that parents usually make for their children.

The Children's Guardian is the legal guardian of approximately 2,800 children.

Highlights

- A consultant's report, Alberta Children's Guardian Role Study, was released in July, 1987. The results of a questionnaire (280 respondents) confirmed the findings of this study. Consequently, changes to the Child Welfare Act and certain policies and procedures relating to the role of the Children's Guardian are planned.

Table 15 **Average Monthly Number of Children for Whom the Children's Guardian had Responsibility - 1987-88**

REGION	PERM. GUARDIANSHIP	TEMP. GUARDIANSHIP	TOTAL
Northwest	202	69	271
Northeast	253	51	304
Edmonton	788	206	994
Central	192	48	240
Calgary	616	145	761
South	133	71	204
TOTAL	2,184	590	2,774

SOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES FOR ADULTS AND FAMILIES

Family Relations

Family Relations is a Department-delivered service which:

- helps families resolve legal issues related to marital breakdown, including disputes over custody of, or access to, children;

- assists in establishing the paternity of children born out of wedlock;

- assist families in obtaining appropriate maintenance orders and agreements.

All applications from separated persons for Social Allowance and all applications for Guardian Social Allowance are reviewed to see whether the person legally responsible to support the family is financially able to do so. Where appropriate, maintenance is either negotiated with the person responsible, or, if this should not prove feasible, the responsible parent or spouse is summoned to court on a Department-initiated application for maintenance.

All court orders obtained are registered with the Maintenance Enforcement Program, Alberta Attorney General, for collection and enforcement. Any maintenance money paid directly to the Social Allowance client is deducted from the assistance paid by Social Services.

All applications for Social Allowance from unwed mothers are referred to family relations workers, who may either help the mothers to obtain a paternity agreement, or arrange for court appearances to settle paternity and obtain child maintenance. This is mandatory for unmarried mothers who are receiving Social Allowance, but it is also a service offered free of charge to other unwed mothers.

Department staff help individuals to apply to Family Court for custody and/or access orders, in cases where a dispute cannot be settled amicably. Formal mediation and conciliation services are offered in some regions, mainly in the Edmonton Region. In some areas, Department personnel assist family members who are making application to the courts under the Mental Health Act, for warrants of conveyance to a psychiatric hospital for evaluation. Under some circumstances, members of the public may also be helped to lay charges for non-support and for assault or threats, under the Criminal Code.

Upon order of the Family Court, family relations workers carry out professional assessments and home studies, in order to aid the courts in the awarding of custody or access orders.

Highlights

- The Edmonton Custody Mediation Project was a joint project of the Social Services and Attorney General departments. It offered closed mediation services and open assessments for couples involved in child custody disputes before the Court of Queen's Bench. A preliminary evaluation found the project to be cost effective and likely to produce significant cost savings in the future for the government. The project is being continued.

- After the passage of the Maintenance Enforcement Act in February, 1986, the Department began registering over 8,000 Social Allowance clients' maintenance orders and agreements with the Department of the Attorney General. This was completed in mid-1987, which is reflected in every Region's lower caseloads.

Table 16 **Average Monthly Family Relations Caseload - 1987-88**

REGION	MAINTENANCE 87-88	(86-87)	COURT SERVICES	CUSTODY INVESTIGATIONS	TOTAL 1987-88
Northwest	682	(1,204)	26	2	710
Northeast	540	(952)	18	1	559
Edmonton	4,614	(6,360)	808	39	5,461
Central	1,043	(1,842)	30	1	1,074
Calgary	1,356	(3,693)	0	0	1,356
South	794	(1,483)	92	1	887
TOTAL	9,029	(15,534)	974	44	10,047

Table 17: **Information Requests: The Office of the Prevention of Family Violence - 1987-88**

RECEIVED FROM:	
Professional/Community Organizations	50%
Government	21%
Educational Institutions	5%
Public	17%
Students	6%
Media	2%

Prevention of Family Violence

The Office for the Prevention of Family Violence provides support and leadership to people working with victims of family violence and their families. Family violence includes the abuse of women, men, children and the elderly in families. The Office provides information, education and training, consultation and community liaison.

Highlights

- A speakers' kit was developed for use in community awareness sessions. The Department oriented 145 people on its use.
- Social Services challenged all mayors and reeves in Alberta to participate in Family Violence Prevention Month in November, 1987. Support and assistance were provided to participating communities through the Office.
- From April 1, 1987 to March 31, 1988, the Office distributed 56,265 items in response to 1,052 requests for information.
- In cooperation with the federal government, a three-year research project began in three communities in Northern Alberta. The goal of the project is to improve the response to family violence in rural communities.

Women's Emergency Shelters

This program provides safe, short-term supportive environments for abused women and their children and for other women in crisis. Shelters, which provide accommodation for up to 21 days, and second-stage housing, which provides apartment suites for up to 6 months, are operated by community organizations. Social Services contributes to the cost of basic emergency services in shelters: food, accommodation, essential clothing, emergency transportation, staffing for counselling, and child care programming. Social Services also funds counselling services in a second stage housing project in Calgary. In addition to Department funding, shelters raise approximately $1 million annually from other sources to help cover the costs of such services as public education and outreach programs.

Highlights

- The first series of annual reports from an automated information system, developed in the last fiscal year, were produced in September, 1987. The system is unique in Canada and provides comprehensive data on families who come to women's shelters. The identity of the families is protected but the data is useful for giving information on the nature and scope of family violence in Alberta. It is also valuable for planning and assessing women's shelter services in the province.

Table 18 **Beds Available in Community Based Women's Emergency Shelters as of March 31, 1988**

REGION	BEDS	ADMISSIONS WOMEN	ADMISSIONS CHILDREN
Northwest	21	287	429
Northeast	46	331	643
Edmonton	81	741	1,193
Central	35	288	672
Calgary	78*	527	693
South	39	296	524
TOTAL	300	2,470	4,154

* Includes 14 second stage housing suites

Shelters for Homeless Adults

Through this program, temporary accommodations and meals are provided to adults who are temporarily unemployed and in need of assistance. The six residences throughout the province provide a sheltered environment, while helping clients to regain and maintain their health and social functioning skills. Services are provided through community-based agencies and Department-operated services, such as Gunn Centre and the Single Men's Hostels.

Edmonton, Calgary and the Northwest Region are the only areas that have developed these types of facilities. Edmonton has the largest number of shelter spaces.

Table 19 **Shelters for Adults: Average Annual Occupancy Rates - 1987-88**

		SPACES	OCCUPANCY (%)
Northwest	Wapiti Lodge	30	79
Edmonton	Single Men's Hostel	249	27
	Urban Manor	69	69
	Gunn Centre	109	84
	Women's Emerg. Accom.	35	78
Calgary	Single Men's Hostel	238	58
	Total Provincial Spaces	730	

Residential Services to the Handicapped

Residential Services to the Handicapped funds or provides residential care and professional services, and supports the development of services designed to meet the special needs of people with disabilities. Eight provincial agencies representing the disabled in Alberta were given grants for administration and some program costs.

Services provided or funded by Social Services include individual case planning; community group homes; approved homes (room and board in private homes); outreach services to increase clients' independent living skills; institutions; and a number of support services, such as personal care attendants or training to prepare disabled people to live in the community.

Respite services are also offered to families caring for a person with a disability. These services support the family in a time of crisis, such as when the caregiver is ill, or when the family requires a break from caring for the handicapped person.

Services are provided through host families or in-home relief facilities, or through relief beds funded in group homes and provided in government operated facilities.

Highlights

- During 1987-88, Youngstown Home changed from a centre for indigent men to a bridge between institutional and community living for mentally handicapped people. The Home works most closely with Michener Centre, where most of its residents come from.
- A special training program was started at Michener Centre for 1,500 staff, to help them create a more normal living and working environment for residents.

Table 20 **Profile of Residential Support Services to the Handicapped - 1987-88**

	NW	NE	EDM	CEN	CAL	SOU	TOTAL
Approved Home Spaces							
Adult	25	0	35	60	90	43	453
Group Home Spaces							
Adult	60	55	287	136	254	52	844
Child	23	32	30	29	49	15	178
Relief	7	2	39	9	12	6	75
Respite Services*							
Adult	-	-	3	-	-	-	3
Child	-	-	9	-	600	34	673
Community Living Support Programs							
Adult	-	-	-	-	16	68	84
Child	-	-	-	-	3	1	4
Independent Living Spaces							
Adult	85	55	325	196	360	163	1,184
Child	137	141	39	325	1,032	250	1,924
Relief	7	2	39	9	12	6	75
TOTAL	344	317	806	764	2,428	638	5,497

* Includes in-home and out-of-home programs.

Table 21: **Facilities of Over 12 Beds Providing Residential Services to the Handicapped as of March 31, 1988**

FACILITY	REGION	CLIENTS SERVED	SPACES
Michener Centre	Central	Adult	1,271
		Child	16
		Relief	20
Baker Centre	Calgary	Institutional -	
		Adult	12
		Child	12
		On-Site Group Homes	
		Adult	27
		Child	27
		Community Group Homes	
		Adult	6
Rosecrest	Edmonton	Child	10
		Relief	5
Eric Cormack	Edmonton	Adult	72
		Child	14
		Relief	5
Resources for the Dependent Handicapped	Edmonton	Adult	45
		Child	46
		Relief	3
Alfred Egan Home Bow Island	South	Adult	27
		Child	1
		Relief	2
Fort Macleod	South	Adult	22
		Child	6
		Relief	2
TOTAL		Adult	1,482
		Child	132
		Relief	37
		Total Clients	1,651

Employment Support Services to the Handicapped

This program helps handicapped people to become self-sufficient, by providing them with training, skill development and job search assistance.

Social Services offers these services through two programs: Community Vocational Training Services and Government-Operated Programs.

Community Vocational Training Services are provided by 68 agencies, contracted by Alberta Social Services. This system provides training support to 2,992 individuals, most of whom are considered mentally handicapped. However, people with physical and mental health disabilities can also be included under the system. Historically, these employment services were specialized training programs for individuals not suited for general manpower vocational services. There is a move today toward individual employment support and maintenance within the regular work force.

Government-Operated Programs includes Michener Centre, which operates programs through Vocational Services. These prepare residents for open or sheltered employment, through pre-vocational training, vocational training, and employment skills training.

In addition to providing employment support, Social Services coordinates a comprehensive rehabilitation program under the Canada-Provincial VRDP (Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons) Agreement. Services are offered through Advanced Education, Career Development and Employment, Health, Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) and Social Services. The Department's role includes program coordination and administration of a cost-sharing agreement. In 1987-88, the program served 38,377 Albertans with disabilities and resulted in revenue to the Provincial Treasurer of nearly $15 million.

Table 22 **Vocational Training Services: Contracted Spaces as of March 31, 1988**

PROGRAM	CONTRACTED SPACES (PROVINCIAL TOTALS)
Developmental activity	186
Employment Preparation Program	
Individual Integrated	426
Group Integrated	66
Facility Based	1,972
Follow-up Goods and Services	
Supported Employment	138
Other	204
TOTAL	2,992

Table 23 **Government-Operated Programs: Michener Centre -1987-88**

Type of Training	No. of Clients Served
Pre-vocational	60
Vocational	120
Employment Skills	224
TOTAL	404

Employment Support Services to Social Allowance Recipients

This group of programs assists people receiving Social Allowance benefits to become self-sufficient through training and employment support. Programs are offered jointly with the federal government (Canadian Jobs Strategy) or with Alberta Career Development and Employment (Employment Skills Program, Employment Alternatives Program, Alberta Business and Community Development (ABCD), Enhanced Employment Skills Program) or with private contractors (Job Finding Centres). Social Services either provides funding or administration to the programs, all of which are intended to help Albertans receiving Social Allowance to find employment or improve their job skills.

Employment Support Services (formerly the Employment Opportunities Program) offers employment preparation, career counselling, referral and placement in training programs and work experience. In 1987-88, the program model changed, so that methods of service delivery are determined by each Region rather than centrally.

Table 24 **Social Allowance Clients Receiving Services from Employment Support Initiatives -1987-88**

Employment Alternatives Program	5,118
Canadian Jobs Strategy*	1,520
Job Finding Centres	1,531
Employment Skills Program	905
Enhanced Employment Skills Program	250
TOTAL	9,324

* Includes participation targets plus additional services resulting from funds diversion

The Employment Skills program (ESP) pays the wages of Social Allowance recipients who have no recent work experience and who need to develop competitive work skills. It is funded by Alberta Career Development and Employment and delivered by Social Services. A total of 905 clients were placed in employment throughout the province under this program.

The Enhanced Employment Skills program was a one-time program which received funding in 1987-88 from the Canada-Alberta Accord on Enhancing the Employability of Social Allowance Recipients. Under the program, 250 people received formal training as well as the work experience training normally provided by ESP.

The Employment Alternatives Program provided private sector employees with wage and training subsidies to hire Social Allowance recipients or people whose Unemployment Insurance benefits have expired. EAP is funded by Alberta Career Development and Employment, which administers it jointly with Social Services. Between June 1 and December 31, 1987, 5,118 positions were filled by Social Allowance recipients under the program.

The Alberta Business and Community Development (ABCD) program supports labour-intensive, community-based projects in the public and private sectors. Alberta Career Development and Employment underwrites the wages for participants, with about one-third of the budget being targeted to Social Allowance recipients. Social Services has delivery responsibility for referral of clients to approved projects.

Canadian Jobs Strategy, a federally-funded program, has two streams to help Social Allowance clients to find work. Job Development offers training and work experience to long term unemployable people; 20% of approved positions are to go to Social Services clients. In the Job Entry stream, youth and women are assisted to make the transition from school or home into the labour market, with both classroom and on-the-job training. Thirty percent of these positions are targeted for Social Services clients. Targets for both streams are reviewed and adjusted as needed. In addition, Canadian Jobs Strategy received $6.4 million in 1987-88 under the Canada-Alberta Accord to Enhance Employability. Funds were for developing additional services and programs for Social Allowance clients.

Table 25 **Number of Applications in Court for Guardianship under the Dependent Adults Act - 1987-88**

	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	TOTAL
TOTAL	1,775	5,743	7,518

Job Finding Centres are run by private contractors and provide instruction in job search techniques to participants, who receive a training allowance. Five job finding centres were funded during the fiscal year and 1,531 people participated in the program during 1987-88.

Public Guardian

The Public Guardian program operates under the Dependent Adults Act. This act enables the appointment of guardians and trustees for adults who are unable to handle their own personal or financial affairs. The legislation also provides for the confinement of dependent adults who are a danger to themselves or others, in a facility that provides protection and treatment.

Individuals, usually family members, apply to the Surrogate Court for guardianship or trusteeship. Where no relative or friend is willing, able or suitable, the Public Guardian or Public Trustee may be appointed.

Where the legal costs of applying for guardianship or trusteeship would be a hardship, the court may have the Crown cover all or part of the costs. Crown costs for guardianship and joint guardianship-trusteeship hearings are paid for by the Office of the Public Guardian.

The Dependent Adults Act was originally intended to govern substitute decision-making for mentally retarded adults in institutions or the community. However, an increasing number of cases involve elderly people with other conditions of mental impairment. These elderly dependent adults are usually cared for in nursing homes or other institutions.

The Public Guardian does not have custody of or provide direct care to dependent adults. The primary service is making decisions and giving consents, mainly in the areas of health care, vocational placement, living arrangements and legal matters. The program is delivered throughout the province by professional staff located in Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary and Lethbridge.

Table 26: **Dependent Adults Under Public Guardianship -1987-88**

REGION	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	TOTAL
Central/Michener	963	1,554	2,517
South/Calgary	474	1,815	2,289
North/Edmonton	338	2,374	2,712
TOTAL (PROVINCE)	1,775	5,743	7,518

Highlights

- Two major studies of guardianship were started in 1987-88 and will continue into 1988/89. These will explore less intrusive alternatives to legal guardianship, and will look at more community involvement in the care of dependent adults.

Senior Citizens Secretariat

The Senior Citizens Secretariat provides information and assists in the coordination of programs and services for older people. It is headed by an MLA who reports through the Minister of Social Services.

The Secretariat gathers and provides information about aging, demographics, and the use and funding of services for the elderly (persons aged 65 and over) in Alberta. Information is provided to the general public, including senior citizens, community groups, institutions, and government departments and agencies. A variety of printed material is developed and distributed by the Secretariat. Between 800 and 1,000 inquiries are handled each month, about 43% of them from senior citizens.

The Secretariat provides an annual operating grant to the Alberta Council on Aging, a province-wide voluntary organization. Organization and temporary grants are also provided for research, education and special projects on aging.

The Secretariat provides staff services to the Provincial Senior Citizens Advisory Council, a government-appointed body representing various regions of the province. The council is chaired by the MLA responsible for the Secretariat.

Appeal and Advisory Secretariat

The Appeal and Advisory Secretariat is an autonomous body responsible to the Office of the Minister. The Secretariat establishes appeal panels to deal with various social issues. It is to this Office that people affected by certain decisions made by Social Services staff and some court rulings are able to bring requests to be heard, if they have concerns. The Secretariat also provides support to a variety of ministerial advisory committees.

Social Services is a decentralized organization, which delivers services to its clients through six service delivery regions and Michener Centre. At the heart of this delivery system are the 52 district offices located throughout the province. Staff in these offices provide support and assistance to Albertans in need of services, most often through personal contact with clients.

The Department also operates a number of institutions and residential facilities, such as those for the handicapped, treatment centres for troubled children, and hostels for adults.

The Department also makes extensive use of contracts and grants with private agencies or individuals, in order to provide a wide range of services for clients. These include psychological assessments; residential care or treatment for children with status under the Child Welfare Act; services for families, residential care for disabled adults; vocational training for disabled adults; and centres for battered women and their children. Negotiation and support of these agency-based services may come from workers in district offices or from specialists in regional offices, depending on local arrangements.

Table 27 **Average Monthly Caseload - Northwest Region**

	1987-88	1986-87
Social Allowance	5,079	4,644
Social Allowance - AISH	95	95
Guardian Social Allowance	382	360
AISH & Modified AISH	906	844
Day Care Subsidy	375	375
Handicapped Children's Services	398	416
Family Relations	710	1,239
TOTAL	7,945	7,973

NORTHWEST REGION

The Northwest Region covers more than 40% of the province's total land area, but serves about 10% of its population. For the most part, this Region is rural and its communities are isolated. The long distances between district offices, the sometimes harsh winter weather and the isolation of much of the Region present challenges to the staff in delivering the Department's programs.

Highlights

- The Northwest Region developed a manual method of counting Social Services clients, which is now used throughout the province. In January 1988, a computerized version of this system, also developed by the Northwest Region, came into use across the province.
- A study was made of the Region's use of psychological resources during 1987-88, to identify the costs and trends of the services.
- The Northwest Region has developed protocols to allow easier cooperation with other resources (such as the RCMP, schools and hospitals) on child welfare matters.
- In working towards its commitment to community living, the Northwest Region repatriated eight Michener Centre clients between September 1 and December 31, 1987. Most of these were in the Grande Prairie district.

Table 28: **Average Monthly Caseload - Northeast Region**

	1987-88	1986-87
Social Allowance	3,708	3,158
Social Allowance + AISH	80	67
Guardian Social Allowance	311	286
AISH & Modified AISH	1,124	1,044
Day Care Subsidy	413	395
Handicapped Children's Services	245	188
Family Relations	559	960
TOTAL	6,440	6,098

NORTHEAST REGION

The Northeast Region serves 166,000 people who live mainly in small towns or on farms. There are two major cities in the Region: Fort McMurray and Lloydminster. The people engage in farming in the south of the Region, oil and gas in the north and east, and forestry and tourism in the central areas. These varied economic bases, along with diverse ethno-cultural values and traditions, created the need for district offices, so that services could be provided that would respond to the varied needs of each community.

In 1987-88, after a period of innovation and new activity in the first half of the year, the Region concentrated on implementing plans and monitoring results.

Highlights

- In May, 1987, the Two Hills Regional Resource Centre opened to provide training for natural and foster families and staff working with mentally handicapped children and adults. The training facility will be available to all Regions for retreats and training programs by April, 1988.
- A respite apartment in Two Hills and a host family program in three rural communities were opened. These facilities allow the families of disabled people to take time off from caring for the handicapped family member.
- Audits of income security and child welfare cases were done for all district offices. These helped to ensure the cases were handled consistently and that clients received the benefits and services available to them.
- Caseloads were adjusted to try to match one social worker to one family. This will provide consistent service to clients and save time for the social workers.
- A shared use agreement was rea[illegible] with the provincial Solicitor General's Department. The agreement shares the cost of [illegible]ds at the Fort McMurray Youth Assessment Centre, which are used for children in the custody of either department. The income Social Services receives from this arrangement has been used to establish a supported Independent Living program for older youth in Fort McMurray.

EDMONTON REGION

The Edmonton Region serves the largest regional population and, with the highest client demand, offers a correspondingly large number of programs and services. The population of the Region is mainly urban, but includes some remote rural populations as well.

In 1987-88, the Region was planning for reorganization, to reflect program rather than district office lines, to improve services to clients and to allow a more coordinated and consistent approach to policy.

Highlights

- In July, 1987, a computer-assisted system was introduced into the day care subsidy program in Edmonton, and this has reduced to two weeks the maximum waiting time for families who apply for subsidy.
- In September, 1987, psychologists were assigned to district offices to do assessments and short-term counselling for children and families. Intensive counselling can be given for more severely disturbed children. The service cuts down the delay between referral and counselling.
- Department staff volunteered to work at the Lost Kids Cabin at Klondike Days. The Department operated the cabin jointly with CFRN Radio Station and Edmonton Northlands.
- In Edmonton, a Catholic Social Services six-bed facility for 14 to 17-year-old runaways was partially funded by the Department. It provided accommodation, meals and comfort to young people who live on the streets.
- A subsidiary agreement between the Department and the Yellowhead Tribal Services Agency was signed in January, 1988. Department staff have, as a result, been assigned to work with the Agency to develop child welfare programs for Native children both on and off reserves.
- In Edmonton, the Parent Counsellor program gave special training to selected foster parents and then placed 20 pre-teen (under 12) children in these homes, starting in June, 1987. The program allowed the children to be placed in family settings rather than in institutions.

Table 29 **Average Monthly Caseload - Edmonton Region**

	1987-88	1986-87
Social Allowance	27,271	24,560
Social Allowance - AISH	565	527
Guardian Social Allowance	647	584
AISH & Modified AISH	5,256	4,807
Day Care Subsidy	5,544	5,612
Handicapped Children's Services	1,280	1,183
Family Relations	5,461	3,871
TOTAL	46,024	41,144

- In January, 1988, a protocol came into use in Edmonton to improve child sexual abuse investigations. It is a practical guide which outlines the roles of child welfare investigators, the police and community agencies during investigations.

- A crisis intervention program began in November, 1987. The program seeks to cut down the number of children coming into the care of the Department. It does this by giving direct support to families, in their homes. Help is given in such areas as child management, budgeting, household management and job readiness.

- In keeping with the Department's commitment to community living for disabled people, Community Behavioural Services in Edmonton closed both its adult and children's residences. Staff from these areas now provide intensive support programs to help disabled people stay with their families and within community programs.

Table 30: **Average Monthly Caseload - Central Region**

	1987-88	1986-87
Social Allowance	7,352	6,714
Social Allowance - AISH	112	94
Guardian Social Allowance	239	233
AISH & Modified AISH	1,533	1,341
Day Care Subsidy	926	908
Handicapped Children's Services	496	293
TOTAL	10,658	9,583

CENTRAL REGION

Over the years, the Central Region has built a strong network of social and income support services, which are available to approximately 285,000 people in the Region. The need for services in the area has remained more or less constant from year to year. For example, Central Region represents 10% of the province's client population, and has a caseload in both the income security and child welfare programs that is equal to 10% of the provincial total.

Highlights

- Funding was provided in the Central Region to establish a program to assist in the treatment of perpetrators of spousal abuse. The first treatment group began in January, 1988.

- A co-op housing society and facility were established in Red Deer for four mentally handicapped clients from Michener Centre, who now live in a facility they partly "own". The facility is owned and operated by a board comprised of mentally handicapped individuals and community residents.

- Vocational and rehabilitation services to mentally handicapped clients were reviewed in 1987-88. As a result, additional non-facility-based vocational training and supported employment programs were established. The aim is to integrate mentally handicapped individuals into the community where they can make productive contributions. As well, it should help to ensure that training resources are used more effectively, and should increase community awareness of the needs and potential of mentally handicapped individuals.

Table 31: **Average Monthly Caseload - Calgary Region**

	1987-88	1986-87
Social Allowance	20,316	20,062
Social Allowance + AISH	401	357
Guardian Social Allowance	304	324
AISH & Modified AISH	3,623	3,099
Day Care Subsidy	4,130	4,102
Handicapped Children's Services	1,429	1,014
Family Relations	1,356	4,032
TOTAL	31,559	32,990

CALGARY REGION

Calgary Region has a population of approximately 730,000. It contracts with over 80 independent agencies to serve the needs of approximately 19,500 Social Allowance clients, 4,000 handicapped children and adults, and 1,400 child welfare clients.

In 1987-88, the Region reorganized. The Child Welfare program was centralized, so that intakes and services were offered from two separate offices. Social Allowance cases were divided among four major offices in Calgary. Social Allowance sub-offices were also set up in Airdrie and Canmore.

Highlights

- In Calgary, a Native Child Welfare Unit has been established. Staffing is over 50% Native. Eventually the unit will be a community-based operation.
- There are now formal joint protocols with both separate and public school systems for dealing with child abuse. This includes a manual for abuse reporting and investigation.

Table 32: **Average Monthly Caseload - South Region**

	1987-88	1986-87
Social Allowance	4,289	3,674
Social Allowance + AISH	90	91
Guardian Social Allowance	116	85
AISH & Modified AISH	1,450	1,372
Day Care Subsidy	1,126	1,130
Handicapped Children's Services	406	373
Family Relations	887	1,575
TOTAL	8,364	8,300

SOUTH REGION

This Region has developed many innovative programs that have helped the Department to improve its services in the area. In particular, the South Region has developed programs in child welfare and Native services.

The Region continued to initiate new or improved programs in 1987-88, with an emphasis on community involvement and innovation.

Highlights

- A regional sexual assault crisis line was established. It is funded by Social Services, through Lethbridge Family Services, and covers all communities, rural and urban, in the South Region.
- Negotiations continued for the transfer of Native Child Welfare to Native bands. Tremendous strides were made in discussions with the principals of the Blood and Peigan bands in 1987. The South Region now has the lowest percentage of Native children in care in the province.
- With slightly less than 6% of the province's Social Allowance caseload, the South Region managed to place 12% of the total Employment Alternatives Program participants in 1987-88.
- A program began in 1987, after four years of planning, which identifies school-age (five to thirteen) children having difficulties at home, and provides support services to the family. The program is jointly funded by the City of Lethbridge, the Separate School Board, the Public School Board and Social Services.

Table 33 **Client Data - Michener Centre as of December, 1987**

Admissions (January - December)	5
Discharges	33
Deaths	13
Relief Admissions	17
Relief Discharges	16

MICHENER CENTRE

The staff of Michener Centre provide for the daily needs, activities and development of residents, through a variety of specialized services and programs.

Michener Centre, in Red Deer, is the largest single facility operated by Social Services. It employs nearly a third of the Department's employees. The Centre provides residential care, training and professional services for mentally handicapped people; prepares them for life in community settings; and helps them to achieve the highest level of self-sufficiency of which they are capable.

Michener Centre includes 32 residential units, including group homes, villas, lodges, a large dormitory and apartment-style accommodation. There is a recreation complex which is open to the community, and includes three pools, a gymnasium, a theatre and an arts and crafts room. There are also academic and vocational training facilities.

In March, 1988, there were 1,227 residents at Michener Centre.

Youngstown Home, a new resource base, is in Youngstown, 135 kilometres east of Drumheller. It is able to accommodate up to 80 mentally handicapped residents, most of whom have been transferred from Michener Centre. It has been designed to bridge the gap between institutional and community living.

Table 34 **Michener Centre - Number of Clients by Functioning Level as of December, 1987**

Borderline	52
Mildly Retarded	175
Moderately Retarded	261
Severely Retarded	282
Profoundly Retarded	496
TOTAL	1,265

Table 35 **Michener Centre - Client Source as of December, 1987**

Northwest	65
Northeast	103
Edmonton	429
Central	296
Calgary	250
South	88
Out of Province	31
Wards	3
TOTAL CLIENTS	1,265

As noted in the Department overview section, the Department is organized to deliver programs and services through six Regions. It is also responsible for developing policies and procedures for the programs and services it delivers. To do this, other support services are in place for developing program policies and for financial and personnel administration.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE DESIGN

The Policy Development and Service Design division has the leadership role for policy, planning and program development within the Department of Social Services. It carries out this mandate with a great deal of communication, coordination and cooperation between the service delivery and operational support staff in headquarters and the Regions.

The Division has four Branches, each with responsibility for specific program areas. Two additional units provide legislative and planning services. 1987-88 achievements for these Branches are found elsewhere in this report, contained in the Highlights section of each program area.

Child Protection Services:

This area promotes and supports the protection of children, in accordance with the Department's legislation and priorities. Development of policies for programs such as foster care, native issues, child welfare services and adoptions are the responsibility of this Branch.

Services to the Handicapped:

This area has responsibility for the development of program policies which assist individuals with a handicap to achieve, regain or maintain financial and personal independence and self-reliance. Residential Services, Vocational Rehabilitation and other employment support services are developed through this Branch.

Family Support Services:

This area carries the Division's responsibilities for the development and interpretation of program policy and standards in areas such as Handicapped Children's Services, Shelters for Adults, Child Care, and Family Relations (through maintenance, custody and court services). It is also instrumental in informing the public about family violence and how to prevent it.

Income Support:

This area provides leadership in the design, development and monitoring of the predominantly financial Income Support Services. These include: Social Allowance, Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH), Alberta Assured Income Plan (AAIP), and Widows' Pension.

Legislative Planning:

Responsibility for ensuring that legal and legislative perspectives are considered in the development of Department policy is the mandate of the Legislative Planning Unit.

Planning Support:

This area assists the Division and the Department as a whole with planning processes and special projects. This unit also has responsibility for maintaining the Department's Business Plan, the Inventory of Services, and quarterly reporting on the Department's progress.

Together, the members of the Policy Development and Service Design Division provide support and leadership in the ongoing development of appropriate social services for Albertans.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

In 1987-88, the divisions of Finance and Administration, Information Resource Management and Management Services were consolidated into the Resource Management Division. This division has responsibility for fiscal, physical and systems resources.

The Department's expenditures were $1.2 billion in 1987-88, an increase of $52.7 million or 4.6% over 1986 87, due mainly to increased caseloads in Social Allowance, Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH), Alberta Assured Income Plan (AAIP) and child care. Department revenue, obtained principally through cost sharing agreements with the federal government, was $477.3 million, or approximately 39.7% of the Department's 1987-88 budget. An additional $112.8 million was collected by Social Services from the Government of Canada on behalf of other departments.

Highlights

- During the postal strike in 1987, the Department distributed the Social Allowance, AISH and Widows' Pension cheques through distribution centres or by direct delivery to clients.
- Between January 1, 1987 and March 31, 1988, $4.3 million (or 93.4%) of the outstanding advances (interest free loans) to day care operators had been collected.
- Day care audit procedures were implemented in September, 1987. These audits will give the Department more accurate information about day care operations and will prevent overpayment of operating allowance claims.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources is responsible for the development and maintenance of Department-wide policies and systems to ensure effective human resource management. It also provides staffing, classification, performance appraisal, benefits administration, LTDI (Long Term Disability Insurance), employee relations, manpower planning, occupational health and safety, and training and staff development services through headquarters and regional personnel offices.

Highlights

- During 1987-88, there were 849 recruitment and selection transactions. There were 1,312 position classifications completed during the year.
- A number of training projects took place in 1987-88. A comprehensive Management Development program began and an annual Department Training Plan was established. As well, Human Resources provided orientation to the new Income Security Programs manual to Income Security staff.
- The Employee Relations Unit focused upon further delegation of employee relations and disciplinary authorities.
- Social Services became a "Smoke Free Workplace" on January 1, 1988.

SOCIAL SERVICES LEGISLATION SUMMARY

To carry out its mandate, the Department of Social Services operates under a number of provincial acts. These are summarized in the following pages.

Department of Social Services Act, 1986

This act establishes the Department of Social Services and provides for the appointment of its Deputy Minister. It empowers the Minister to:

- engage and pay for expert advice on any matter under his/her administration
- delegate powers and duties
- enter agreements
- establish advisory boards and councils
- take action for the promotion of social development
- take measures to ensure that financial, protective, special care, or preventive support services are provided
- operate social care facilities and charge resident fees
- research and inquire into matters of social development
- disseminate information for the promotion of social development
- investigate and report to Cabinet on activities of agencies which have as their object the social development or care of persons and which are not under the administration of any other minister
- make payments in advance from the general revenue fund and pay grants in accordance with regulations
- require the furnishing of security for repayment of funds provided by grant or contract
- establish boards and committees to advise or administer any Social Services programs.

Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped Act

This act provides a maximum monthly benefit of $720 to persons who:

- suffer from a severe, chronic physical or mental handicap which substantially limits their ability to earn a livelihood;
- are Canadian citizens or permanent residents aged 18 years or more; and
- have a limited income (including that of their spouse).

The act authorizes the director (appointed under the act) to review, change or discontinue the benefit and recover overpayments if the handicapped person's circumstances have changed. The director may also appoint a trustee to administer a handicap benefit on behalf of a person.

The act authorizes the Minister to establish appeal panels to hear appeals from decisions of the director on any matter respecting a handicap benefit.

Child Welfare Act

Key Principles

1. The best interests of the child are paramount.

2. The least disruptive services, which support and promote family integrity and privacy, are preferred over those which remove the child from the family.

3. There must be clear criteria for intervention and decision making.

4. There must be procedural safeguards, rights to be heard, and review mechanisms for families and children.

5. Services must be flexible to meet specific needs of children and families.

6. Cultural heritage must be respected.

7. Professional accountability is needed.

8. There is a need for an Office of the Children's Guardian.

9. Responsibility for child welfare can and should be transferred to native communities.

Overview

A. Section 1(2): Grounds for Intervention
Survival, security or development of the child endangered due to:

- abandonment
- non-provision of necessities including medical treatment
- ongoing or substantial risk of physical or sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- cruel and unusual punishment or treatment
- child's condition prevents provision of appropriate care.

B. Section 2: Principles to be Considered in Decision Making

- Support of family for intervention.
- Least intrusive, most appropriate intervention is preferred.
- Views and preferences of child should be considered.
- Child would be removed from home only if less intrusive measures are inadequate to protect the child.
- Placement decisions should consider cultural and religious heritage, stability of child and family, continuity, and the individual child's needs and level of development.

C. Part 2: Agreements

- Agreements allow clients a voluntary means to obtain services or to transfer custody or permanent guardianship of the child.

D. Part 3: Court Orders

A court which finds a child in need of protective services may order:

1. Supervision

- by child welfare worker in the child's home
- for a maximum length of six months (reviewable)
- with terms and conditions proposed by the court, including assessment or treatment of child or caretakers.

2. Temporary Guardianship

- by Children's Guardian, who becomes joint guardian of child with previous guardian
- for a maximum duration of one year, renewable for up to one year
- with plan of care filed with the court by director
- involves removal of child from home, but anticipates return of child to own family or imminent independence of older child
- allows access by, and consultation with natural guardians.

3. Permanent Guardianship

Terminates rights of child's guardians.

- Children's Guardian becomes guardian for all purposes.
- Return to natural family not contemplated.
- Child over 12 must consent where application of permanent guardianship order is brought by the child's guardian.
- Order terminates when child turns 18 or marries.

4. Joint Guardianship

- Any adult may apply to become joint guardian with Children's Guardian in respect of a child who is the subject of a permanent guardianship order or agreement.
- For adults with significant relationship with the child, where adoption is not contemplated, and child over 12 consents.

E. Part 4: Secure Treatment

The act authorizes compulsory mental health treatment of children suffering from mental or behavioural disorders and presenting danger to themselves or others. It allows for short term (five days) certification and for admission of children under temporary or permanent guardianship by court order for 30 days, renewable for 60 and 90 days. Orders are reviewable once during period of the order or renewal/extension period.

F. Part 5: Private Guardianship

The act allows an adult who has had custody of child for more than six months to apply to become the child's guardian. This applies to any child in Alberta, not just those in care of the Department (duplicates Domestic Relations Act). The Department may be asked to assess the applicant's suitability if the application concerns a child in care. Children over the age of 12 must consent to an order of private guardianship.

G. Part 6: Adoption

- No major changes, pending decisions on recommendation of the Provincial Advisory Committee on the Family's study of private adoption in Alberta.
- Creates voluntary disclosure registry for adult adoptees, birth parents, siblings to obtain identifying information.
- Provision for Minister to disclose identities where necessary to health of adoptee.
- Provision for subsidized adoption where necessary to best interests of child.

H. Part 7: General

- Handicapped child agreements with guardian for provision of service to family or child.
- Provisions for involvement of Indian child's band in decisions regarding placement and services to an Indian child.
- Appeals from Provincial Court to Court of Queen's Bench.
- Decisions of a director may be appealed to an appeal panel, including adoption or foster placements, access, disclosure of information, refusal to enter support, custody or handicapped children's services agreements, etc.

Dependent Adults Act

Key Principles

1. Provides for appointment of guardians of the persons and trustees of the estates of dependent adults.

2. Establishes Office of the Public Guardian.

Overview

1. Guardianship of the Person

A. Criteria for appointment of private or public guardian:

- adult is repeatedly or continuously unable to care for him/herself and to make reasonable judgements in respect of matters relating to his/her person; and
- guardianship would be in the best interests of and result in substantial benefit to the adult.

B. Order must specify and limit powers and authority of guardian to those which court feels are necessary to enable the guardian to make reasonable judgements about the dependent adult, for example:

- where the dependent adult should live and with whom
- social activities
- nature of work
- educational, vocational training
- licenses and permits
- legal proceedings (commence or settle) not relating to estate of the dependent adult
- consent to health care
- day to day decisions about dress and diet
- other matters specified by court.

C. Compulsory care of a dependent adult when:

- the adult presents a danger to self or others
- confinement would be in the adult's best interests
- the order would ensure protection and treatment of adult.

A compulsory care order is in force for three years and must be reviewed by the courts.

The act also creates the Office of the Public Guardian, which acts as guardian where no other person is willing, able or suitable to act. Guardianship orders may be reviewed at any point, and must be reviewed within six years.

The act provides for the appointment of an alternate guardian in case of the death or temporary absence of the guardian. Application may be made under the act in court to discharge a guardian.

The act allows medical treatment of an incompetent (not dependent) adult without consent where two physicians have deemed the treatment necessary.

2. Trusteeship

Criteria for trusteeship order:

(i) adult is unable to make reasonable judgements about estate matters and is in need of a trustee, and

(ii) trusteeship would be in the person's best interests.

The act establishes the authority of trustees and sets out procedures for trustees to file accounts with courts. It provides for trusteeship without court order by certificate of incapacity, signed by two physicians. Such a certificate must be reviewed by a review panel once every two years; appeals may be made from the appeal panel to Surrogate Court.

The Public Trustee is appointed when no other person is willing, able or suitable to act as trustee.

Maintenance and Recovery Act

Key Principles

1. To provide for determination of parental responsibilities for and payment of maintenance with respect to children out of wedlock.

2. Provide for the recovery of Social Allowance and AISH overpayments.

Overview

Part 1: Administration

- Establishes a director of Maintenance and Recovery to administer the act on the Minister's behalf.
- Provides for confidentiality and disclosure of personal client information.

Part 2: Child Welfare

- Provides for agreements and court orders for payment of maintenance by putative fathers, for children born out of wedlock, and for limited support for unwed mothers.

Part 3: Public Welfare

- Provides for recovery of Social Allowance and AISH overpayments by agreement or court order, and enforcement of this by registration of caveats against land.

Part 4: Enforcement

- Enforcement of maintenance orders and agreements has been assumed by the Maintenance Enforcement Program (Department of the Attorney General).
- Enforcement of recovery orders and agreements except Guardian Social Allowance done by Social Services (Income Security program).

Senior Citizens' Benefits Act

Overview

Provides a maximum $95 monthly supplemental benefit (through the Alberta Assured Income Plan) to Albertans who:

- receive Old Age Security Pension and a Guaranteed Income Supplement from the federal government, or
- are between 60 and 65 and receive Extended Spouses' Allowance from the federal government and are not eligible for Widows' Pension from Social Services.

The act provides for the termination of benefits and the recovery of overpayments.

Social Care Facilities Licensing Act

This act governs the licensing of social care facilities housing four or more persons and defined as:

- a place of care for the aged or infirm
- a day care centre
- an institution or shelter under the Child Welfare Act
- a hostel for indigents.

The act gives the following powers to a director:

- Inspection of social care facilities, premises, books, records, food, enforceable by order of Court of Queen's Bench.
- May issue work orders to correct inadequate care or fitness of premises.
- May cancel or suspend license for noncompliance.

The act allows an appeal panel to review licensing disputes, and gives the Minister the power to issue stop orders in respect of operations and activities of social care facilities.

Social Care Facilities Review Committee Act

Under this act, the Lieutenant Governor in council appoints a committee of 12 to visit, review and inspect social care facilities, and investigate complaints regarding care and treatment. The committee makes an annual report to the Legislative Assembly.

Social Development Act

Key Principles

1. Financial and other forms of assistance should be provided to those in need of assistance.

2. Appropriations for assistance are to be made to ensure that no person in Alberta will lack the goods and services essential to health and well-being.

3. A sufficient level of Social Allowance should be provided to recipients so they may obtain basic necessities for themselves and their dependents.

4. The government is entitled to all moneys paid for maintenance or alimony to a person receiving Social Allowance.

Overview

The act authorizes the Minister to enter into agreements with the federal government and other provinces with respect to health and welfare measures. It authorizes a director to provide Social Allowance to:

- an employable person in need of assistance
- an unemployable person in need of assistance
- persons or institutions on behalf of a child.

The act establishes:

- criteria for the provision of Social Allowance
- rights of subrogation
- responsibilities of municipalities to provide social assistance (not currently operational)
- an appeal panel for appeals of Social Allowance decisions.

Widows' Pension Act

The act provides a maximum monthly widow's pension of $720 to a widow or widower who:

- is a resident of Alberta
- is between the ages of 55 and 65 years
- is a Canadian citizen or permanent resident other than a sponsor immigrant
- has a limited income.

A person who receives widow's pension is able under other legislation to receive benefits that senior citizens receive, such as:

- extended health benefits
- free health care insurance
- renter assistance grants
- senior citizen home heating grants.

The act authorizes the Minister to:

- alter, suspend or discontinue a widow's pension under certain circumstances
- recover overpayments
- appoint a trustee to administer a widow's pension on behalf of a widow
- establish appeal panels to hear appeals of decisions about widow's pension.

SOCIAL SERVICES EXPENDITURES 1987-88, BY VOTE AND CONTROL GROUP ($000's)

Grand Total: Votes 1, 2 and 3 (1987-88 Actual)	
Manpower	170,942
Supplies/Services	181,218
Grants	847,355
Fixed Assets	1,306
Other	75
TOTAL	1,200,896

(Source: Finance & Administration, Resource Management)

SOCIAL SERVICES EXPENDITURES: VOTE 1 ($000's)

1987-88 Actual

VOTE 1	Manpower	Supplies & Svces.	Grants	Fixed Assets	Other	Total
Minister's Office	308	80	—	—	43	431
Appeal & Advisory	204	3	—	—	—	207
DM-Soc.Sv.	257	381	—	22	—	660
ADM-Pol.Dev. & Service Design	842	207	—	7	—	1,056
ADM-Resource Management	9,776	6,456	—	461	—	16,693
Ex.Dr.-Human Resources	3,345	318	—	41	—	3,704
ADM-Service Delivery	295	93	—	—	—	388
NW Region	2,082	765	—	60	—	2,907
NE Region	1,815	498	—	34	—	2,347
Edm. Region	3,963	1,027	—	53	—	5,043
Cent. Region	4,101	510	—	54	—	4,665
Cal. Region	3,561	781	—	75	—	4,417
South Region	2,304	383	—	33	—	2,720
TOTAL - VOTE 1	32,853	11,502	—	840	43	45,238

SOCIAL SERVICES EXPENDITURES: VOTE 2 ($000's)

1987-88 Actual

VOTE 2	Manpower	Supplies & Svces.	Grants	Fixed Assets	Other	Total
Appeal & Advisory	35	630	—	—	—	
ADM-Policy Dev.& Svc. Design	1,026	509	—	5	—	1,540
ADM-Resrce Mgt.	202	138	69,687	—	—	70,027
ADM-Service Delivery	—	—	(49)	—	—	(49)
NW Region	2,464	200	55,597	—	—	58,261
NE Region	2,245	185	45,504	—	—	47,934
Edm. Region	10,255	863	315,862	—	—	326,980
Cen. Region	2,579	343	82,021	—	—	84,943
Cal. Region	8,296	1,485	223,158	—	—	232,939
South Region	1,904	242	53,097	—	—	55,243
TOTAL - VOTE 2	29,006	4,595	844,877	5	—	878,483

SOCIAL SERVICES EXPENDITURES: VOTE 3 ($000's)

1987-88 Actual

VOTE 3	Manpower	Supplies & Svces.	Grants	Fixed Assets	Other	Total
Appeal & Advisory	55	545	444	—	32	1,076
ADM-Pol.Dev. & Service Design*	5,211	1,970	1,283	32	—	8,496
ADM-Resource Management	1	511	35	10	—	557
Children's Guardian	860	303	—	7	—	1,170
ADM-Service Delivery	75	56	(16)	—	—	115
NW Region	4,746	10,219	—	7	—	14,972
NE Region	4,556	9,095	—	11	—	13,662
Edm. Region	29,656	45,657	—	86	—	75,399
Cen. Region	3,046	14,500	422	2	—	17,170
Cal. Region	15,760	53,321	—	46	—	69,127
Sou. Region	4,950	16,687	—	29	—	21,666
Ch. Welfare - Corporate	4	—	—	—	—	4
Ex.Dir.- Michener	39,983	12,171	—	232	—	52,396
Sr. Citizens Secretariat	177	87	311	—	—	575
TOTAL - VOTE 3	109,080	165,122	2,479	462	32	277,175

* Includes Office of the Public Guardian - $2,478 (in thousands).